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The Change at CIA

There are such strict limits to what is knowable about the Central Intelligence Agency and its workings that any discussion of Mr. Helms' departure from the directorship and Mr. Schlesinger's appointment to replace him must necessarily rest on a comparatively small store of information. Even so, one or two things are plain. And chief among these is the fact, evident from what is known about the two men themselves, that one highly qualified and eminently capable official is being replaced by another.

Richard Helms has spent most of his professional life in intelligence work, and he has acquired a reputation among those qualified to judge, as a man of great honesty and tough-mindedness. The term "tough-minded" in this connection can only summon forth imaginary zither music for some people and visions of grown men running around endlessly shoving each other under trains. But Mr. Helms—unflappable, personally disinterested, and beyond the reach of political or ideological pressures where his judgment is concerned—earned his reputation for tough-mindedness in an intellectual sense. As Agency Director, he has been far less a public figure or celebrity than some of his predecessors—Allen Dulles, for example, or John McCone—evidently preferring to maintain a certain becoming obscurity. He has worked very effectively with some of his overseers on the Hill. And, if the leaked (not by CIA) material, such as the Pentagon Papers, that has been appearing in the press is any guide, he and his Agency have also served their executive branch leaders with some distinction. One gets the impression that from the presumed efficacy of bombing the North Vietnamese to the presumed necessity of responding to every wild surmise of what the Russians were up to in nuclear weapons development, Mr. Helms has offered a practical, dispassionate and rigorously honest—if not always popular—view.

That the Congress will be pushing for some greater degree of responsiveness from the CIA in the coming session seems pretty certain. And there also is at least a chance that internal bureaucratic difficulties at the Agency will require some managerial rearrangements. In a way, solely because he comes to CIA from outside (not from up the ranks), James Schlesinger may be specially suited to take on both. But he has other qualifciations. At the Rand Corporation in California, Mr. Schlesinger did analytic work that gave him more than a passing familiarity with the intelligence estimating business. At the Budget Bureau—as it was then known—in the early days of the Nixon administration he proved himself a very astute, not to say downright cold-eyed, scrutinizer of military budget requests. His brief term at the AEC was notable in several respects. Mr. Schlesinger bucked the pressure of the atomic energy establishment to insist that the AEC take note of and respond to the claims of its ecological critics. And he attempted to push the agency back from its political role toward the more disinterested service role it was meant in the first place to fulfill. He, like Mr. Helms, is demonstrably a man of talent, dedication and impressive intellect. We should have been content to see them stay on in their present jobs. But if Mr. Helms is to leave the Central Intelligence Agency, we think Mr. Schlesinger is a first class choice to replace him.

[redacted]

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A Novel of 'Cowboy Diplomacy' in the Congo in the '60s

[redacted]

Reviewed by Bruce Oudes

Books

The reviewer has written extensively on African affairs and was a member of the American mission to the Congo (Kinshasa) in 1964-65.

MATATA. By Malcolm McConnell. (Viking, 380 pp., $6.95)

In this process of adding up our flesh and blood as well as psychological losses from our recent adventures abroad, there should be a line for the foreign service, especially the junior ranks. Talented potential candidates have shunned government service, and a number of those on the inside have resigned outright. An entire foreign service generation has been depleted by this self-purge.

Some signed petitions and demonstrated before they quit; others made a splash of resignation as a question of principle. Malcolm McConnell did neither.

He quietly went to a Greek Island and wrote in eloquent fury a taut first novel about how a young American diplomat and ex-Freedom Rider, Steve Sherman, and his sexually athletic wife spent the last week of 1965 in the Congo during a *matata*, the Swahili equivalent of brouhaha.

And what, pray tell, does this now ancient Congolese history have to do with, say, the U.S. "people-to-people" campaign in Indochina? As Sherman, the disenchanted FSO, put it to a CIA man on New Year's eve in Albertville, "All you people going around the world writing surrender passes and bombing the hell out of people and stuff like that. It's O.K. as long you say they're Communists ... Why the hell do *we* always have to decide who gets bombed and who gets the milk powder?"

Sherman is disgusted not only with the superficiality of the U.S. contact with the Congolese, but with the vapid, play-every-night life he and Lisa are leading within the American community—a phenomenon known as embassy incest.

One of the paranoia-inducing truths of embassy life abroad is that in posts without an FBI agent, it is the CIA section that keeps tabs on the private lives of all Americans. McConnell demonstrates just what a clout for conformity this lever can deliver. The spook tells Sherman, "You won't get a security clearance for a pay toilet in Red Square when I'm through with you."

"Matata" is the first novel to give a slice of what life was really like for Americans in the Congo in those slapdash days, and McConnell's effort is a vivid, chilling success. The Congo, now the Republic of Zaire, was the kind of place where one set of American officials used every possible pressure to keep private Americans from joining the South African-Rhodesian dominated mercenary commandos, while others saw to the "mercs" combat needs including jeeps—with AID friendship decals—to chase Simba rebels. It wouldn't do for Americans to actually kill Africans, not even errant ones.

McConnell, fortunately, does not limit his perspective to a one-way view of the Congo's tragedies, but he tells at sympathetic counterpoint the only slightly incredible story of the quintessential Congolese, Pierre-Marie Tshimpama, a victim of independence.

One is almost relieved to see Tshimpama's youthful respect and admiration for whites evolve to adult hatred. Anything less would have meant McConnell pulled punches. A CIA B-26 I saw parked on the apron at Kamina in 1964 carried an unforgettable reminder. On the nose of that plane "our" anti-Castro Cubans were flying on behalf of the Congo's national air force was the World War II-style hand-painted name: "Boogie's Bogey."

The difficulty of drawing a fair conclusion about what the U.S. did in the Congo is that, according to the usual yardsticks of international success, our cowboy diplomacy worked. The Congo is still whole, the U.S. role and expenditure there is down considerably, American influence remains high, and the government is relatively stable. Joseph Mobutu is just as much a fat-cat general and expert at one-man elections as Nguyen Van Thieu, but he and his country have receded in the American mind back to the travel pages.

Nevertheless, the American diplomatic brigade that helped put out the fire is to a substantial degree still intact. When things got slow in the Congo, the State Department transferred McConnell's boss, Ambassador G. McMurtrie Godley, back to Indochina. The gregarious Godley took to Laos a choice selection of aides including his CIA station chief and his present chief deputy where, to this day, the "Congo mafia" is still doing business.

However, the protagonist of this novel, Steve Sherman, had no difficulty reaching a conclusion about the quality of American diplomacy he saw. He told the CIA man all about it: "You're all just robots. You don't have any human feeling left . . . They're just spies or niggers or slopes to you. They're something to f——— around with, something to laugh at and plan air strikes against and make up lies about in your horseshit reports. It doesn't matter where they send you. It'll always be the same, doesn't matter if it's Cuba or Laos or the Congo. You just follow orders."

The civil rights collegians of the early '60s didn't integrate easily into the foreign service. They weren't as indifferent and calculating as the traditional mold would have preferred, but the Steve Shermans were intensely aware of what Washington is now rediscovering: the human consequences of foreign policy.

WASHINGTON POST

1 OCT 1971

Policeman to the World

Reviewed by
Henry Steele Commager

The reviewer taught at Columbia University for 20 years and is now the Simpson Lecturer at Amherst College. He testified this spring before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on presidential powers in foreign policy.

Books

THE U.S.A. ASTRIDE THE GLOBE. By *Merlo J. Pusey.*

(Houghton Mifflin, 247 pp., $5.95)

When James Russell Lowell wrote that America was nutured "by strong men with empire in their brain" he had in mind that empire which stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific, not one that encompassed the globe. To the generation of the Founding Fathers, and their successors through most of the 19th century, these two concepts of empire were antithetical; more, they were irreconcilable.

Mr. Pusey here conducts an inquiry into the nature of the new American empire, one which ostentatiously plunges into the "exterminating havoc" and the degradations" of every quarter of the globe. The new American empire, in sharp (and perhaps in the long run beneficent) contrast to earlier empire, from those of Alexander and Augustus to those of Louis XIV and Queen Victoria, is neither cultural nor economic, but almost wholly military.

Mr. Pusey has analyzed and charted the manifestations of this American response to the Communist challenge: $1,000 billion in military expenditures; an annual military budget of some $80 billion; military bases in 33 countries; an elaborate networrk of alliances which has led us to propping up the Franco regime in Spain, the rule of the colonels in Greece, the military regime in Brazil, the Thieu dictatorship in South Vietnam and so forth; the world's largest fleet off the China coast, perhaps the second largest fleet in the Mediterranean; enough nuclear overkill to destroy any enemy 10 times over; CIA subversion in some 60 countries. He has not explored, though he hints at, the larger costs — to the success of the United Nations, to our standing in the international community, to our own internal unity, to our economy, our culture and our morality.

How has it happened that a people who so long cherished the notion that they were happily isolated from the rest of the globe now eagerly embraces involvement—military and political involvement—in every quarter of the globe?

This is a large subject and one which Mr. Pusey does not undertake to illuminate. Two considerations appear to be relevant.

Santayana has said that Americans never really solve any problems; they amiably bid them goodbye. We are now in process not merely of bidding problems good-bye but of bidding good-bye to both history and experience; it may be doubted that there has ever been an American administration as ignorant of and contemptuous of history as that which now presides over our frustrations and defeats. The Founding Fathers did not feel themselves bound by history—indeed; they were confident that America was to open a new page in history—but they were familiar with it, and with its "lessons". They thought that history was "philosophy teaching by examples" and studied that philosophy and those examples: thus Madison and Hamilton in the "Federalist Papers," John Adams in the "Defense of the Constitutions," Jefferson in all of his state papers; Tom Paine in "The Rights of Man.'

We no longer read history in this way or to this purpose; yet Presidents Johnson and Nixon might have done worse than study the history of the Sicilian Expedition as told by Thucydides: taken to heart, that lesson might have allowed us to escape from Vietnam.

The last four administrations have been prepared, in little things as in big, to ignore history, even our own. They have been prepared to ignore what we ourselves long took for granted: that secrecy defeats itself; that you can't fool all the people all the time; that the military cannot be trusted with responsibility for national policies; that power corrupts; and that—in the words of John Stuart Mill—a government which dwarfs its men in order to make them docile instruments of power will find that with small men no great things can ever really be accomplished.

This readiness to forego the lessons of the past is in part responsible for the second major source of confusion and error: our persistence in a double standard—a double standard of national and international conduct that has by now become second nature. Examples are familiar: we denounce Russia (and justly) for invading Czechoslovakia to overthrow a government it disapproves, but we ourselves invade Santo Domingo for much the same purpose; we regard it as "a dark day for mankind" when China detonates a nuclear bomb but we ourselves dropped nuclear bombs on Japan and threaten Vietnam and China with them; we have one standard for the Germans guilty of war crimes at Nuremberg and for Japanese in the Tokyo Trials, but a very different one for our own violation [redacted] the laws of war, the treatment of prisoners, and the Mylai massacre.

It is, still, always the other side that cheats—Russia or China, or Cuba, or North Vietnam. They are the aggressors. It is they who violate the law. It is they who are the militarists and force us, all unwilling, to take to arms.

Mr. Pusey proposes some remedies and some changes designed to advance peace throughout the world and harmony at home. Put an end to the Vietnam adventure; get out of Southeast Asia, and, eventually, of Korea and the Philippines. Abandon our excessive bases in most parts of the globe—but not NATO: NATO is a beneficent institution. Limit the arms race, defuse trouble spots in the Middle East and India and the Caribbean, restore civilian control of the military and restore the balance between the executive and the legislative power.

All of this is, needless to say, to the good; needless to say it is not good enough. It leaves the Cold War almost as cold as ever. The Soviet is not going to loosen pressure on her border states as long as we maintain a mighty military presence in Germany; it is not going to stop playing a power game in the Middle East as long as the U.S. Navy dominates the Mediterranean and Greece and Turkey are part of NATO. China is not going to abandon the Cold War as long as we insist on a two-China policy or force rearmament on the Japanese, whom we once forbade to arm. The Pentagon is not going to be returned to that subordinate place which it should occupy in our political system as long as Presidents and Secretaries of Defense are prepared to act as its spokesmen and champions; the Congress is not going to recover its constitutional equality as long as so many of its members are pusillanimous in performance of duty. Americans are not going to abandon their delusive double standard either at home or abroad as long as their schools, their press, their television, their leaders continue to impress upon them that they are a peculiar people who cannot be judged by ordinary standards.